

# The Thanksgiving Play

By: Larissa Fasthorse

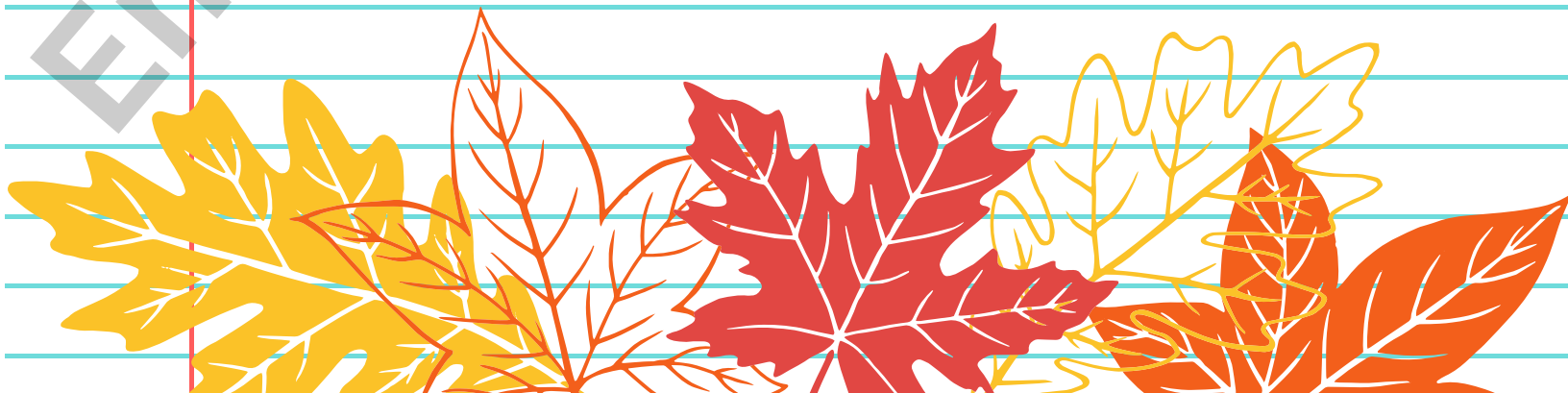
Directed by: Kristie Post Wallace  
Emma Rollins, Dramaturg

Were the Indians wronged?

Indigenous  
people

Native  
Americans

Brigham Young University  
Theatre and Media Arts

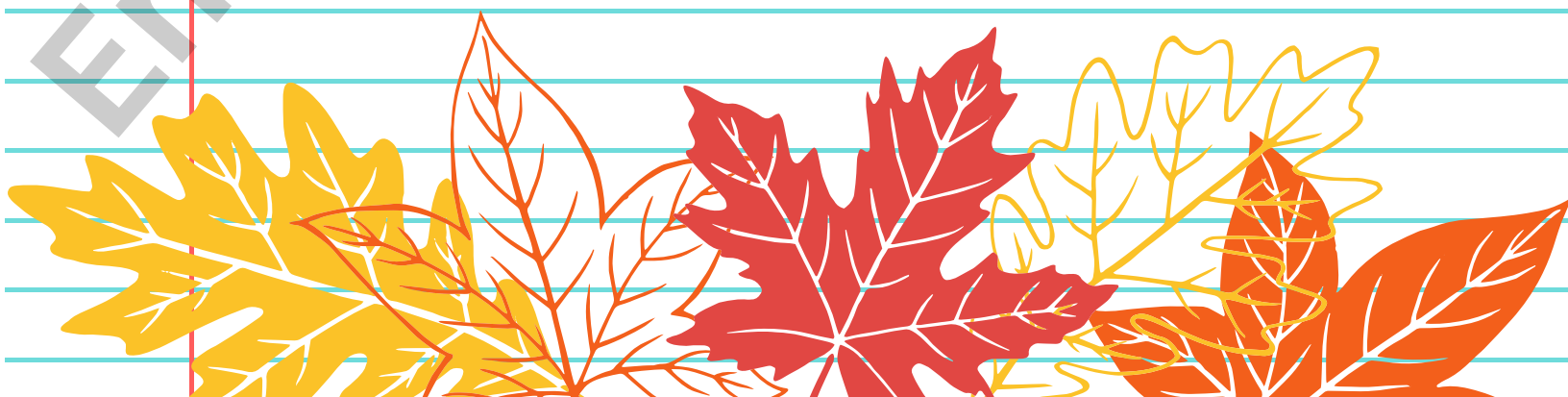


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Image from Seattle Public Theatre



# SCRIPT ANALYSIS:

The Thanksgiving Play is an interesting play about cultural appropriation as well as racism. When first having read the script it was interesting to look into the obvious things that happened throughout the play with microaggressions, especially during the scenes that were of classrooms with students. However, the thing that originally stood out to me was the ending. It talks about how sometimes we are trying to do too much and that causes a problem because we can't speak for a race or people that we aren't. So to make things equal for both sides that were trying to be represented, both Native American people and white people they ended up doing nothing. The last lines are the lines that affected me saying "Jaxton: [...] We need to be less. Do less. That's the lesson. By doing nothing, we become part of the solution. But it has to start here, with us." That really struck me because it's a constant loop, if we don't do anything we are part of the problem, but if we try to do too much and

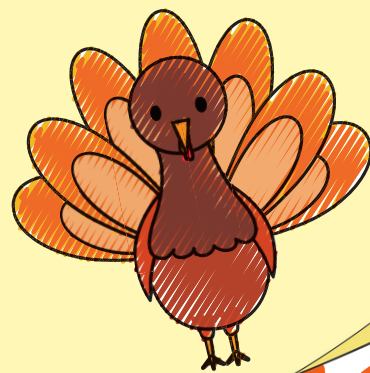


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are culturally insensitive then we are also part of the problem. The biggest point of the show is that we need to let people's voices be heard but if they aren't there does anyone have the right to say things for them? It's really interesting to look at this from a certain perspective because the playwright herself is an Indigenous woman. She approaches the idea of color-blind casting but also that sometimes we need to know, yet while they're trying to write their wrong they end up doing even more things that are not okay.

Looking at this script, as it was written back in 2015 before any of the Black Lives Matter Movements started, it's really interesting to look at race and racism in this perspective as we are more of an open-minded generation and have been as new things come to fruition.

Overall when talking with Kristie



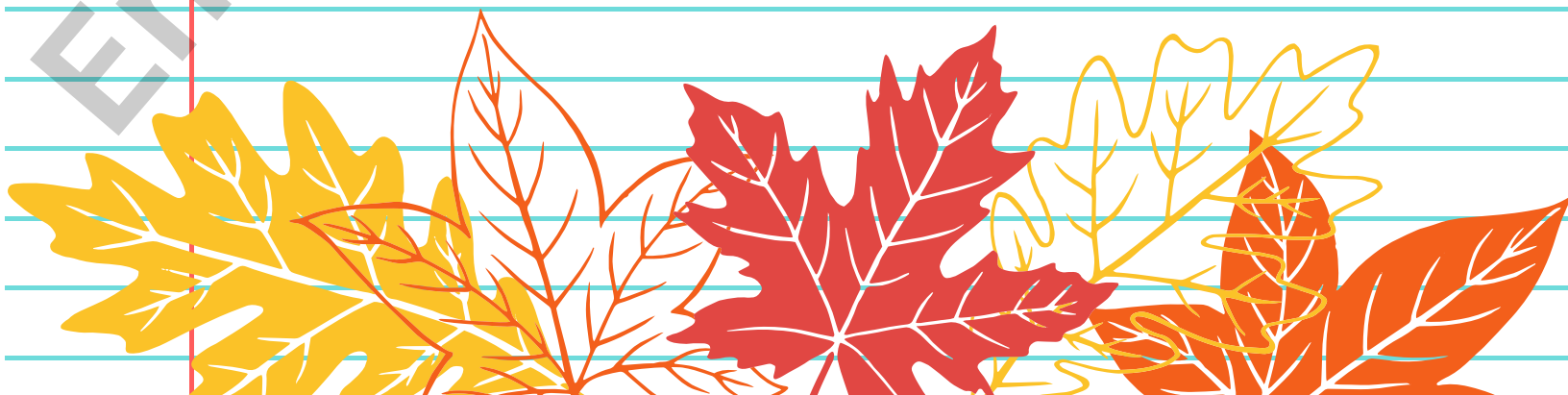
during our first meetings, we talked about what the themes of this whole thing are. We talked a lot about how it's extremely focused on racism, and especially the fact it's about Indigenous people. Oftentimes, in our modern American perspective when we talk about racism we think of white people, black people, or even Hispanics. Yet we don't always think of Native American (Indigenous) people as people that we have been extremely racist and harsh in the past. People tend to brush it off, saying "that was a different time", but when we come to think of it now, they're hardly represented in media and we don't acknowledge their existence. We forced them onto tiny parts of land while we took over their part and forced them to either join our culture or needed to live in their tiny area with no support.

Because this play was written by an indigenous woman, it shows the problems that our society has



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faced with our treatment of Native Americans, and racism and general. However, it makes a commentary on essentially what not to do to try and solve this historical problem.



# RESEARCH:

## Google Drive:

Kristie had quite a bit of research done that she wanted the actors to look at. So she collected some documents together for the actors and crew to look at.

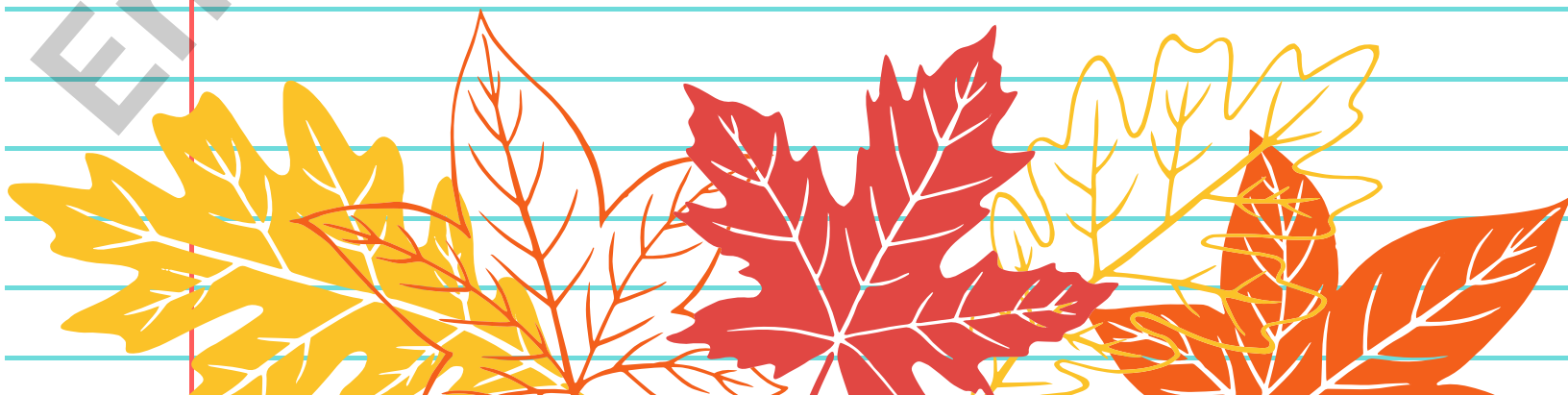
Click [Here](#) to find the Drive

I was able to look through many of the documents and give a bit of a summary. When I came to the first rehearsal I was given some time to talk with the audience about the research in the document that they should look into and what I recommended for each of the actors.

## The Author:

I also did some research on the playwright to help the actors have a better idea of where this story specifically was coming from.

- [Here](#)
- [Here](#)

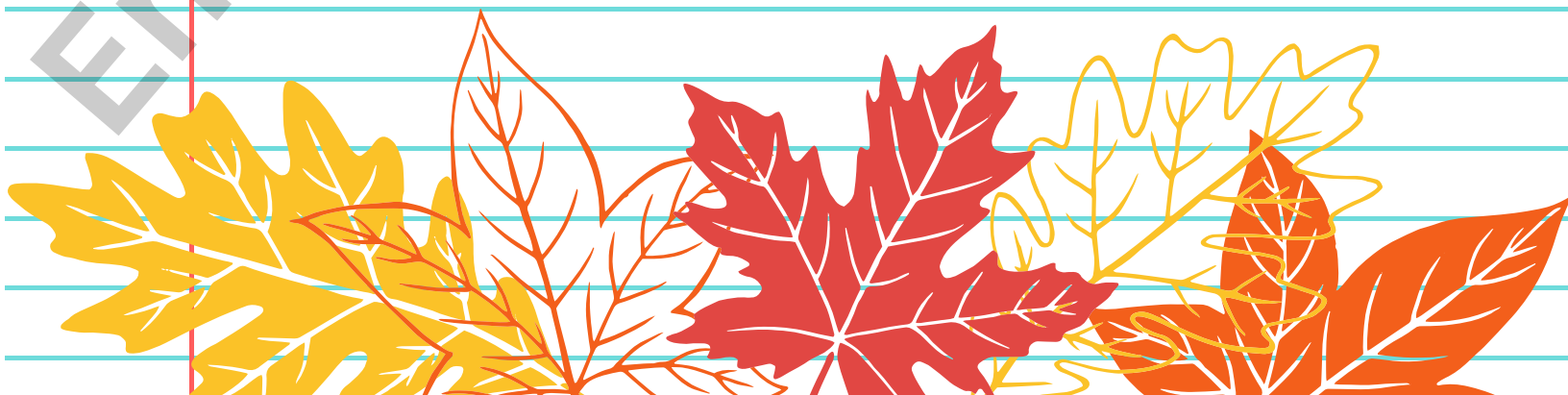


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I spoke with them about how the playwright is Native American and she's trying to make a statement about casting and how many people were upset about her writing in Native American characters that are harder to cast with legality, so she's trying to make a statement. Overall this helped them understand the point of why this play now.

## Glossary:

Kristie and I were able to come up with a glossary for the cast with important terminology for the cast so that moving forward they would understand key terms that would help them to be culturally appropriate.





# GLOSSARY

Playwright Larissa FastHorse Info

The Thanksgiving Play It's Okay to Laugh Article

Agitprop:

n. Political Propaganda, especially in art or literature (originally Communist)



Ally:

n. One that is associated with another as a helper: a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle  
An ally is an individual who stands up for a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle

- An ally is an individual who stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against. The term allyship then - as defined by the Anti-oppression Network - is an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person



or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle

- An ally is an individual who stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against. The term allyship then - as defined by the Anti-oppression Network - is an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group. (<https://pillarnonprofit.ca/news/what-does-it-mean-act-ally>)

- [Link!](#)
- [Link!](#)



**A - Always centre the impacted**

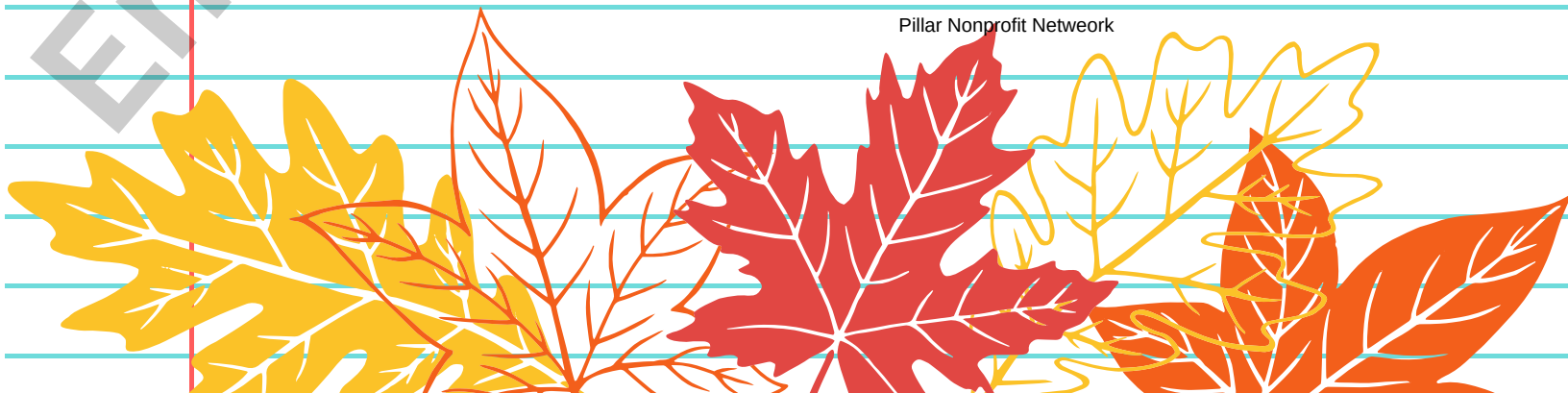
**L - Listen and learn from those who live in oppression**

**L - Leverage your privilege**

**Y - Yield the floor**



Pillar Nonprofit Network



Appropriation:

n. the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission

Beginnings of Football on Thanksgiving:

Interesting Article [Here](#)

Burning Man:

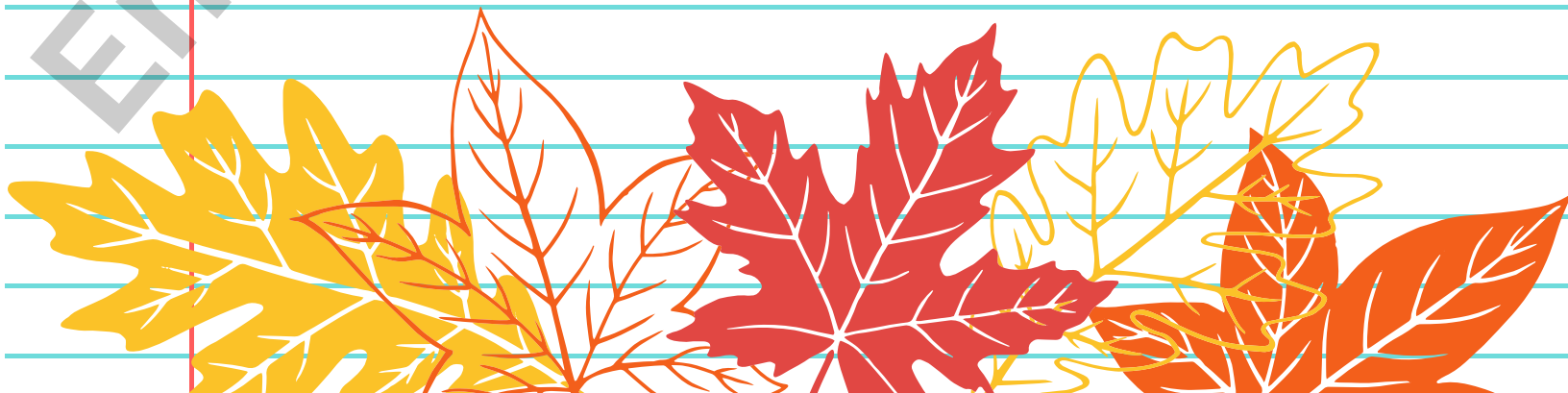
Reference [Here](#)

Christopher Columbus and Native Americans:

History [Article](#)

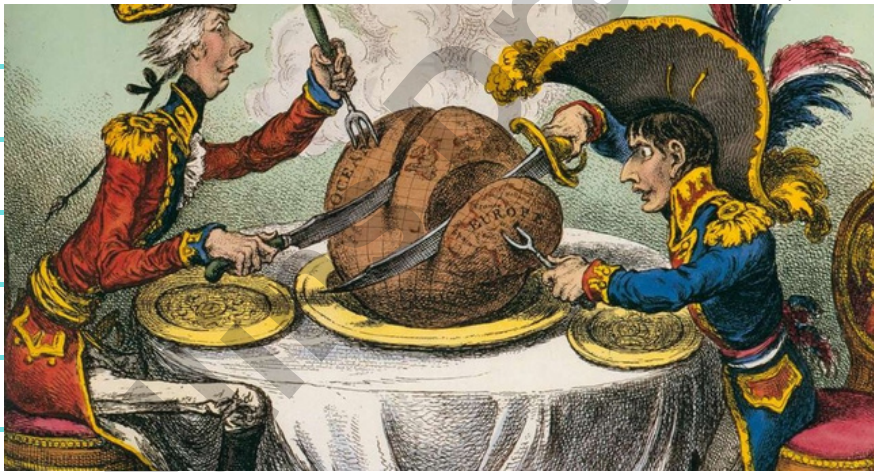
Coded Language:

Coded language describes phrases that are targeted so often at a specific group of people or idea that eventually the circumstances of a phrase's use are blended into the phrase's meaning.



Colonial:

Colonialism is a practice or policy of control by one people or power over other people or areas, often by establishing colonies and generally with the aim of economic dominance. In the process of colonization, colonizers may impose their religion, language, economics, and other cultural practices.



theboar.org

Color-Blind Casting:

Color-blind casting, also referred to as non-traditional casting, integrated casting, or blind casting is the practice of casting without considering the actor's ethnicity, skin color, body shape, sex, and/or gender. (Refer to The Welcome Table essay in the Drive)



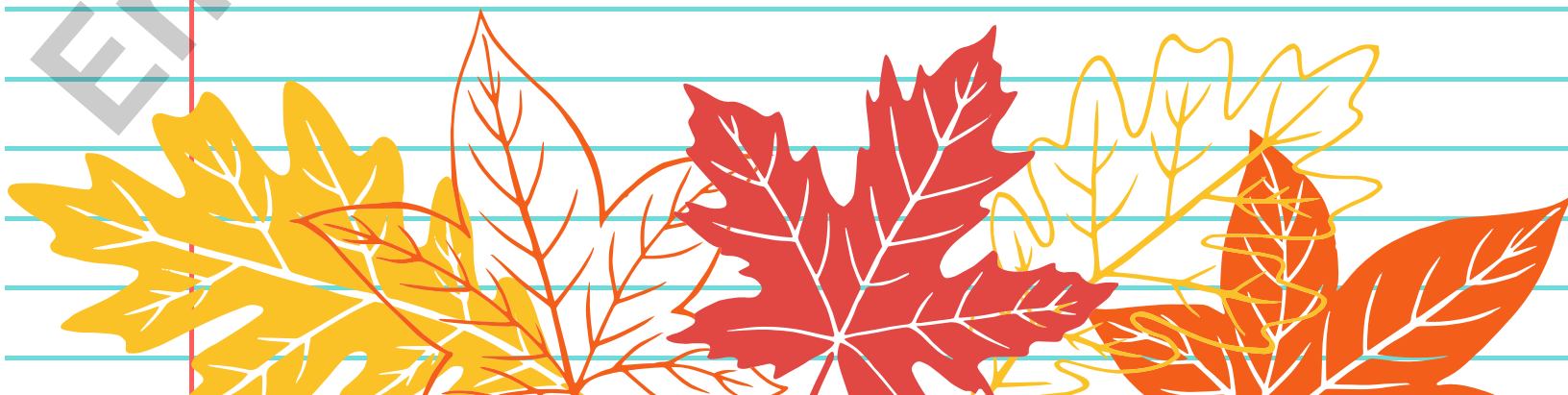
Ethnic Specific:

adjective

1. pertaining to or characteristic of a people, especially a group (ethnic group) sharing a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like.
2. referring to the origin, classification, characteristics, etc., of such groups.
3. being a member of an ethnic group, especially of a group that is a minority within a larger society: ethnic Chinese in San Francisco.
4. of, relating to, or characteristic of members of such a group.
5. belonging to or deriving from the cultural, religious, or linguistic traditions of a people or country: ethnic dances.

noun

1. a member of an ethnic group.



Hispanic Heritage Month: [Link](#)



National Park Service

Hybridization:

n. the process by which a cultural element blends into another culture by modifying the element to fit cultural norms.

Massasoit:

(born c. 1590, near present Bristol, Rhode Island, U.S.-died 1661, near Bristol), Wampanoag Indian chief who throughout his life maintained peaceful relations with English settlers in the area of the Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts.

[LINK](#)



## National Day of Mourning:

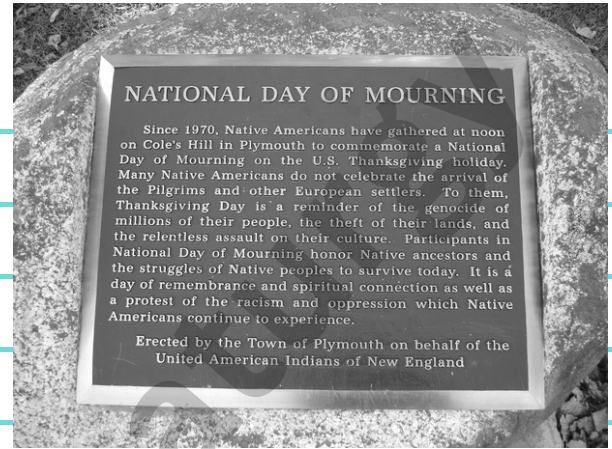
The National Day of Mourning takes place on the fourth Thursday of November, this year it's on November 24. If this date sounds familiar to you, it's because the fourth Thursday of November also coincides with Thanksgiving in the U.S. Every year on the National Day of Mourning, Native American people in New England gather together to protest. To them, Thanksgiving serves as a reminder of the unjust treatment that Native Americans have received since the 1620 Plymouth landing.

[Link](#)

[Link](#)

## Native American Heritage Month:

November is Native American Heritage Month! It's a time to celebrate the rich histories, diverse cultures and important contributions of our



The National Day of Mourning plaque on Cole's Hill in Plymouth, Massachusetts, Wikipedia



nation's first people. First Nations Website.

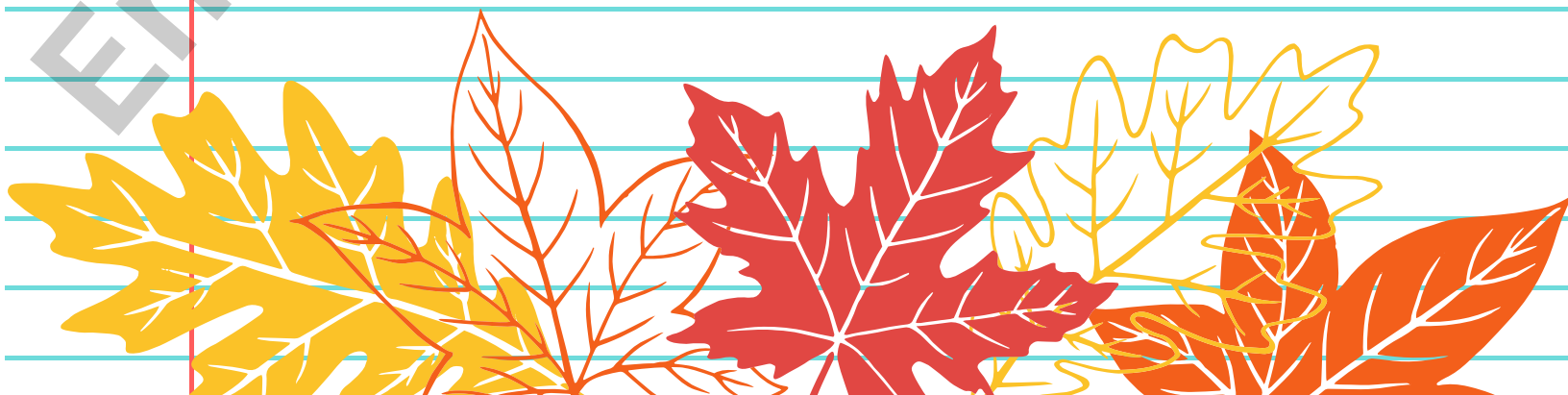
### Native American vs. Indigenous:

Indigenous Peoples refers to a group of Indigenous peoples with a shared national identity, such as "Navajo" or "Sami," and is the equivalent of saying "the American people." Native American and American Indian are terms used to refer to peoples living within what is now the United States prior to European contact.

### Pedro Menendez:

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, (born February 15, 1519, Avilés, Spain-died September 17, 1574, Santander), a Spaniard who founded St. Augustine, Florida, and was a classic example of the conquistador-intrepid, energetic, loyal, and brutal.

[Link](#)





### Performative Activism (Wokeness):

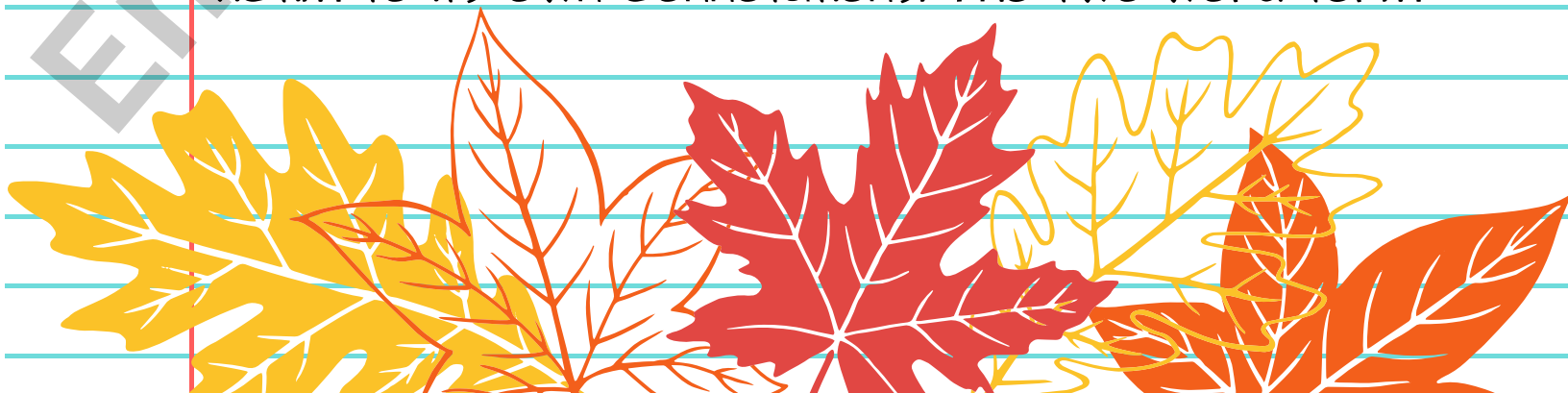
Performative activism is activism done to increase one's social capital rather than because of one's devotion to a cause. It is often associated with surface-level activism, referred to as slacktivism. The term gained increased usage on social media in the wake of the George Floyd protests.

### Post-Colonial:

Postcolonialism, the historical period or state of affairs representing the aftermath of Western colonialism; the term can also be used to describe the concurrent project to reclaim and rethink the history and agency of people subordinated under various forms of imperialism.

### Privilege (White):

White privilege is-perhaps most notably in this era of uncivil discourse-a concept that has fallen victim to its own connotations. The two-word term



packs a double whammy that inspires pushback.

1) The word white creates discomfort among those who are not used to being defined or described by their race.

2) the word privilege, especially for poor and rural white people, sounds like a word that doesn't belong to them-like a word that suggests they have never struggled.

[Learning For Justice Link](#)

Redface:

used to refer to the practice of wearing makeup and clothing to imitate the appearance of a North American Indian person, typically as part of a performance. This practice is generally regarded as offensive.

[Salt Lake Tribune Article](#)

Thanksgiving in Public Schools:

[Utah Educator Thanksgiving Approach](#)





Heritage History

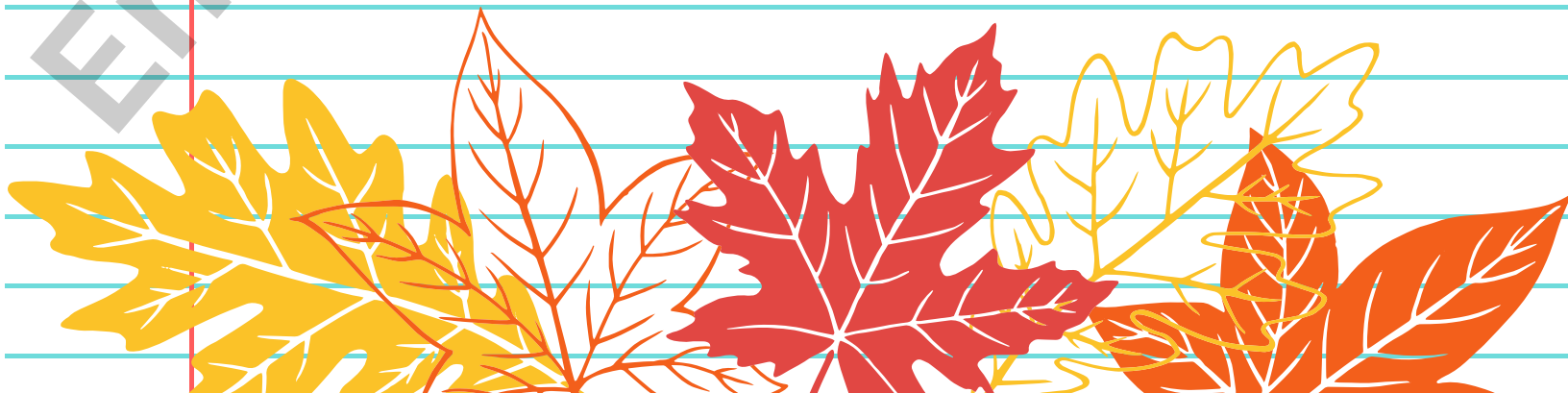
### Samoset:

Samoset was the first Native American to make contact with the Pilgrims in Plymouth. As subordinate chief of the Abenaki tribe, Samoset was conducting diplomatic relations with the Wampanoag chief Massasoit during the time of the settler's arrival, and he greeted the colonists in English, having learned their language from Europeans living in Maine.

[Link to More](#)

### 1565 Saint Augustine, Florida:

On September 8, 1565, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés landed on the shore of what is now called Matanzas Bay and began the founding of the Presidio of San Agustín. Later the settlement would be called St. Augustine, Florida.



Turtle Island:

'Turtle Island' is the name for the lands now known as North and Central America. It is a name used by some Indigenous peoples who believe their land was formed on the back of a turtle.

Though regional versions exist, the core of this creation story relates to a time when the planet was covered in water. Different animals all tried to swim to the bottom of the ocean to bring back dirt to create land but they all failed. A muskrat was the last animal to attempt the task. The muskrat swam deep and remained underwater for a long time. Eventually, the muskrat resurfaced with some wet soil in its paws. Sadly the swim took the muskrat's life, but Nanabush (a supernatural being who has the power to create life) took the soil and placed it on the back of a turtle. With this act, land began to form and so became Turtle Island. Not all creation stories from the Indigenous



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Peoples of America feature a turtle, some refer to a pregnant Sky Woman, others feature a Raven, and others an ocean spirit called Sedna.

### Using Term Pilgrim vs. Separatists:

Pilgrims were separatists who first settled in Plymouth, Mass., in 1620 and later set up trading posts on the Kennebec River in Maine, on Cape Cod, and near Windsor, Conn. Puritans were non-separatists who, in 1630, joined the migration to establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

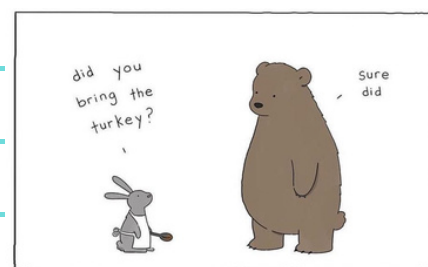
### [New York Times Article](#)

### Vegan and Thanksgiving:

### [Why Thanksgiving and Vegan](#)

### Wampanoag:

The Wampanoag are one of many Nations of people all over North America who were here long before



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any Europeans arrived, and have survived until today. Many people use the word "Indian" to describe us, but we prefer to be called Native People. Our name, Wampanoag, means People of the First Light.

Woke:

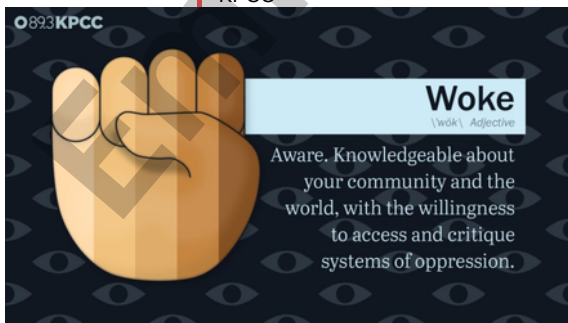
Alert to injustice in society, especially racism.

[Check this Article Out](#)

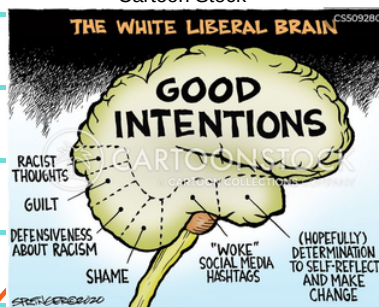
Woke, cont. Broke/Woke/Bespoke:

Broke / Woke is a phrasal template used to express the fading cultural significance of one trend in favor of a newer one. The trend is based on the slang term Woke, which means to have a perceived enlightened, generally left-leaning political belief. Bespoke is a step beyond the enlightenment of woke.

KPCC



Cartoon Stock



Essence

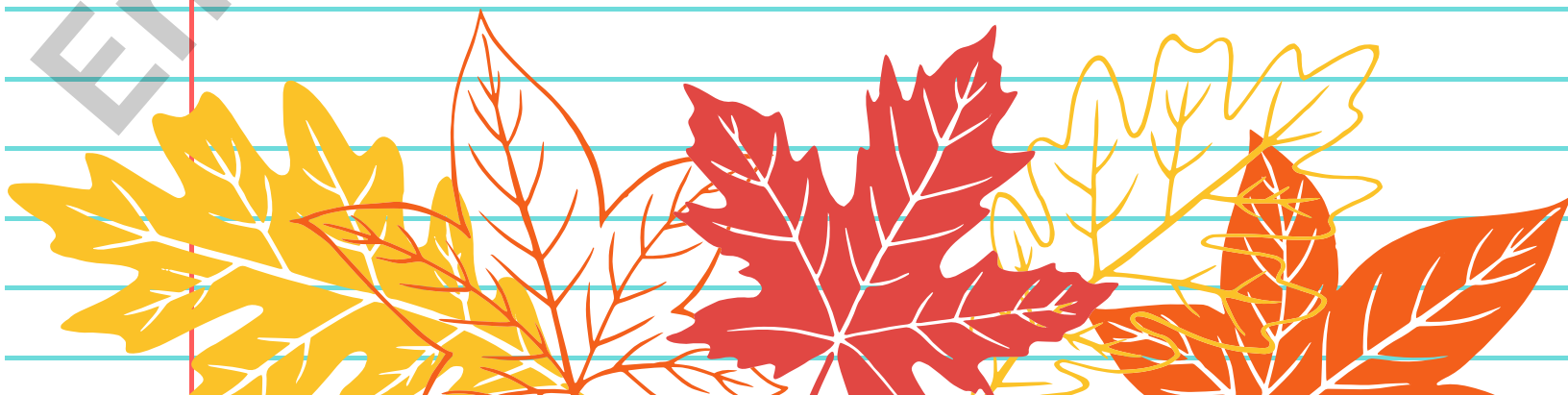


# Talking with Native

## Americans

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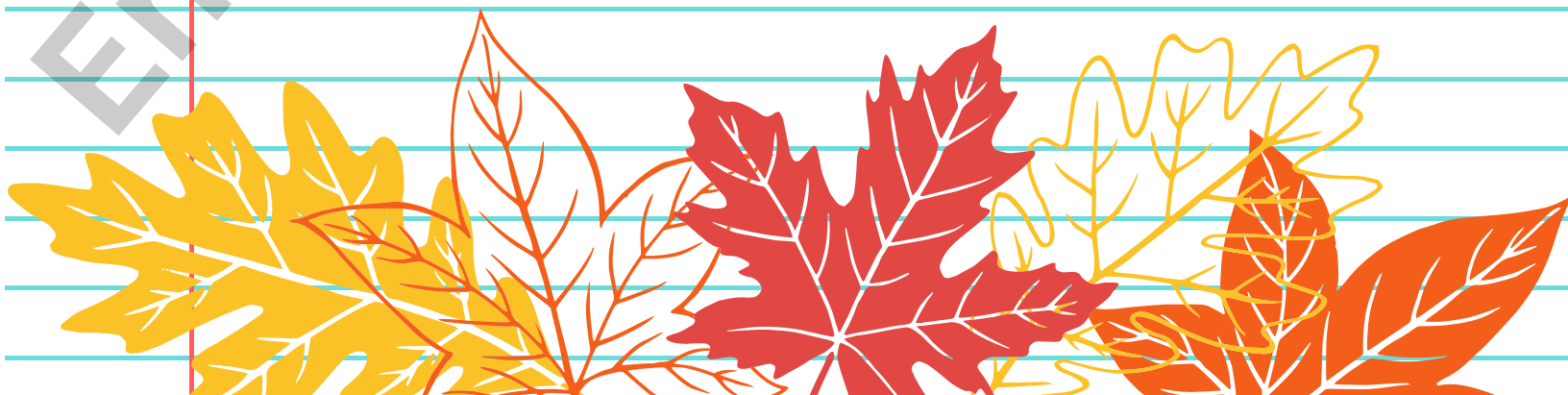
I had the opportunity to connect with some Native American people here on campus. I started by talking with the director of Living Legends because they have a Native American section. She recommended some of her dancers as well as brought up the idea of talking with someone from the Tribe of Many Feathers. The Tribe of Many Feathers is a club that is here at BYU for students who wish to stay involved and connected to te  
There were many questions asked by actors and myself as well and we were able to bring in the people to talk with the cast and crew to give direct answers straight from the source and not try to find things out from other people who don't have the qualifications of their ethnicity.



# Actor Workshop

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So for my workshops, I was able to make some connections with some Native American students who are here at BYU, as they are the source we are trying to learn from and not offend. I was first able to make contact with a performer in Living Legends, Cheyanne Elton. I knew her before I started work on this production and I knew her connections with her Native American family and some of the things she's been trying to be involved in. So I was able to talk with her and she was willing to come. She still has family who lives on a reservation and is still very connected, such as her Aunt is the Chief Justice of the Navajo tribe. Cheyanne is also minoring in "American Indian Studies" here at BYU, she wants to be able to learn more about her own culture.

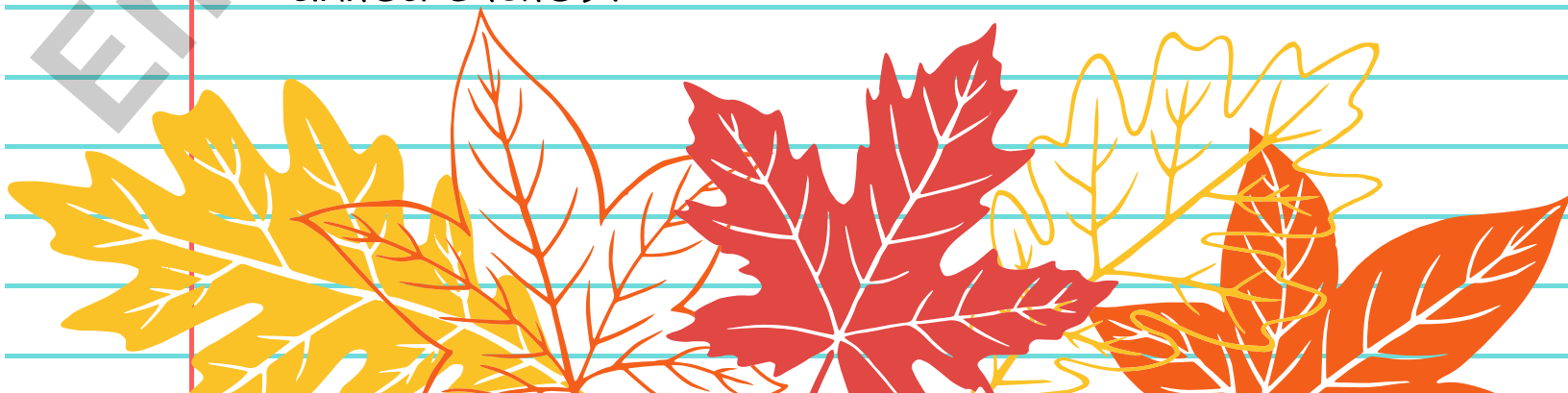




with a reservation.

With both of them, the actors asked many questions and so I compiled them all, questions about many different things about Native American tribes, preferred terminology from within the culture, how they view Thanksgiving, etc. and I emailed them to the guests ahead of time Here is the exact list of questions:

- "How do you feel about the representation of Indigenous people in media, like Pocahontas for example?"
- "What is more common in your experience, direct racism and derogatory remarks or microaggressions and remarks that people don't even know are racist?"
- "Do you have an opinion or thoughts on the founding or celebration of Thanksgiving in the United States?"

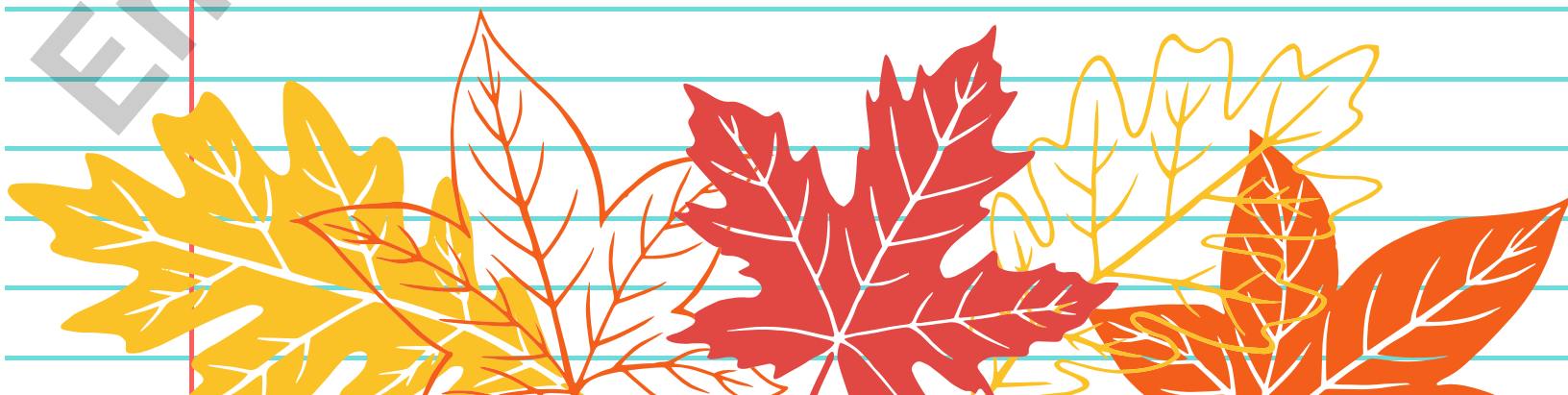


- "From my own personal experience, I haven't really seen much if any discussion or experience regarding Native Americans in today's world via media, culture, etc and after some basic research I've found that there are nearly 600 different tribes throughout the country. Where does one who is uninformed/inexperienced with Native American culture/history even begin to understand and educate themselves on being an advocate/decent human being with regards to the people?"
- "Is there general consensus among Native Americans on Thanksgiving as a celebrated, national holiday in the US? In other words, what does Thanksgiving look like in the 21st century to Native Americans?"
- "The play we are working on touches a lot on the representation of Indigenous people in theatre, and I would say film. For you, what does representation mean to you? What would you



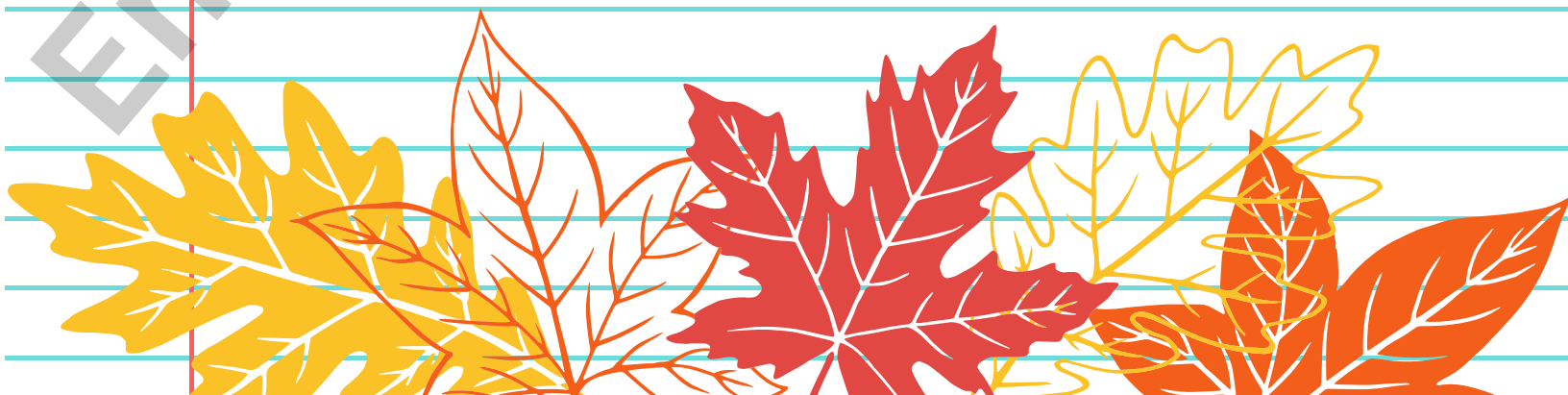
like to see more of? What do you want to see less of?"

- "Are there behaviors from non-indigenous people you do not want to see anymore? What behavior/actions would you like to see more of from non-indigenous people?"
- "Like they ask in the script, I'm curious what they were taught about Thanksgiving, whether that was at home or at school, while they were growing up."
- "My one question as of now is what kinds of stories have been passed down through your family and culture? It doesn't have to be about thanksgiving in particular either."
- "What is your experience with Thanksgiving in the past? Do you celebrate it?"
- "What does Thanksgiving mean to you? Is it more of a mournful day or do indigenous people also celebrate Thanksgiving?"



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Both guests acknowledged that so many questions were posed and by the desire of the actors to create an accurate story. With Cheyanne specifically, we had a simple round table talk where many questions were answered and new ones were asked based on the conversation. We discussed things like casting choices in modern media, if wearing turquoise as a non-Native American was offensive, and what reservations look like today. She spoke about how the one thing she wishes is that people treat the problems Native Americans are facing as a problem that is affecting everyone. She brought up how many Native American women are raped and murdered and because of legality with reservations and the US government they are hardly ever talked about and mostly forgotten. She hopes that with people learning about her culture and being able to share the things that make it special, people will be more respectful and caring.



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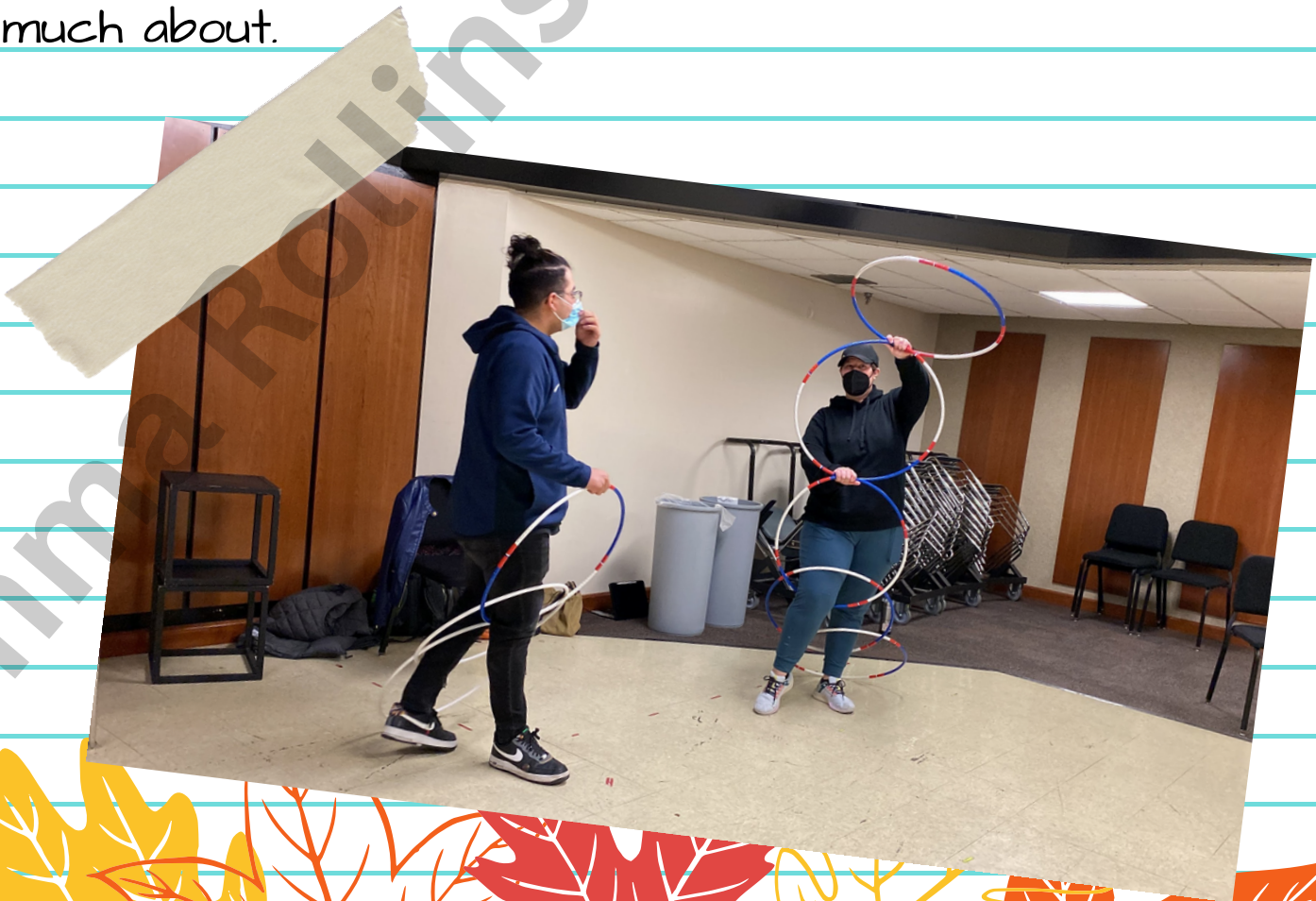
Naabaahii also talked about his life and the life of his grandfather who decided to leave the reservation and attended a private school. He also told us about his cousins who are members of the Native American Church although his direct family is members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After some discussion, Naabaahii also took some time to tell us about his personal experience with Thanksgiving, after which he showed us his personal set of hoops and taught us some basic hoop dance moves. When asked about this dance, he shared with us that he is willing to share some moves and dances with those that would be respectful of his culture to preserve their traditions. However, he also told us that some dances are considered too sacred and he would never teach them to anyone who is not of a specific tribe or naturally Native American. He continued to explain other sacred parts of the culture such as headdresses that can only be worn



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by specific people for specific reasons. This is something that is widely misunderstood and appropriated by those outside the culture.

Learning parts of the hoop dances helped us feel a lot closer to another culture and feel a true bonding between people. The challenge of this dance style was also something we hadn't already considered. All of this combined led to greater respect for a culture we previously didn't know much about.



# 4th WALL NOTES

## 4th Wall:

noun

a website where the dramaturg and creative team can write about workshops, relate the piece to the current community, and have a virtual space to share more thoughts on the piece than would fit in a playbill.

Link to Article: [HERE](#)

## Holy Culture

February 25, 2022

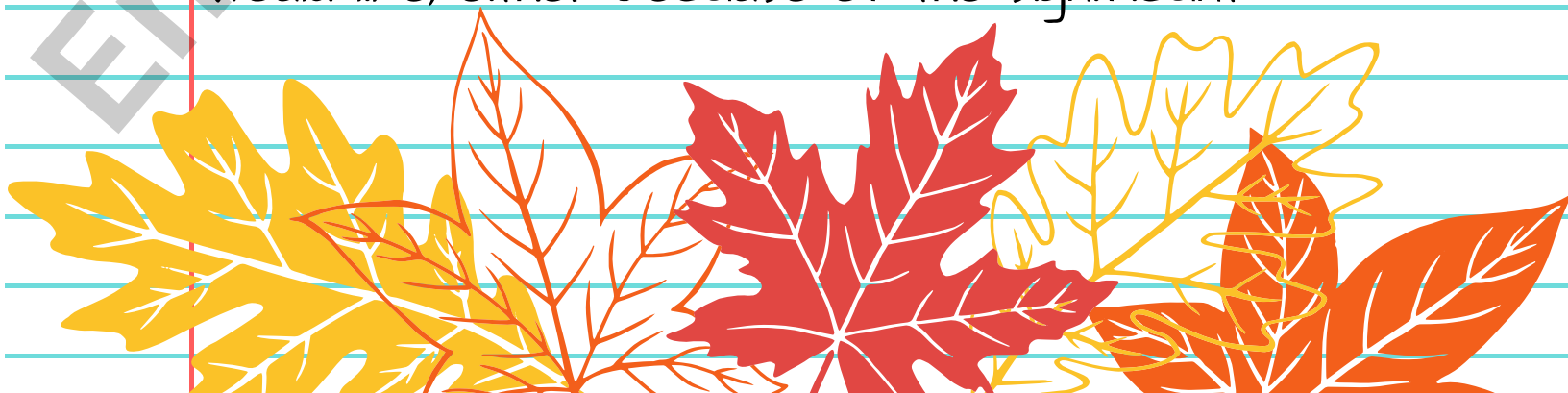
By Emma Rollins, Dramaturg

While music has always been an integral part of many cultures, for Native Americans dance and music are very special to their culture. From healing dances such as the Jingle Dress dance to spiritual ones like the Eagle Dance to more fun



PowWow style dances such as the Fancy Dances, their culture is very connected to the Heavenly Spirit in many ways. So we invited some people who are Native American to come and speak to the cast and crew. We were able to invite Cheyanne Elton, a dancer with Living Legends in the Native American section who's also minoring in American Indian Studies, and we invited Naabaahii Tsosie, a Native American dancer who travels the world and shows off his culture. Cheyanne was able to talk with us a lot about their culture, and Naabaahii was able to talk with us and show us some of the things behind dance in his culture.

A very popular dance that many people know, and some Native Americans practice their whole life, is the Hoop Dance. Each hoop represents eternity like our Father in Heaven, never having a beginning or an end. Each hoop can be decorated how the dancer would like, either because of the significant



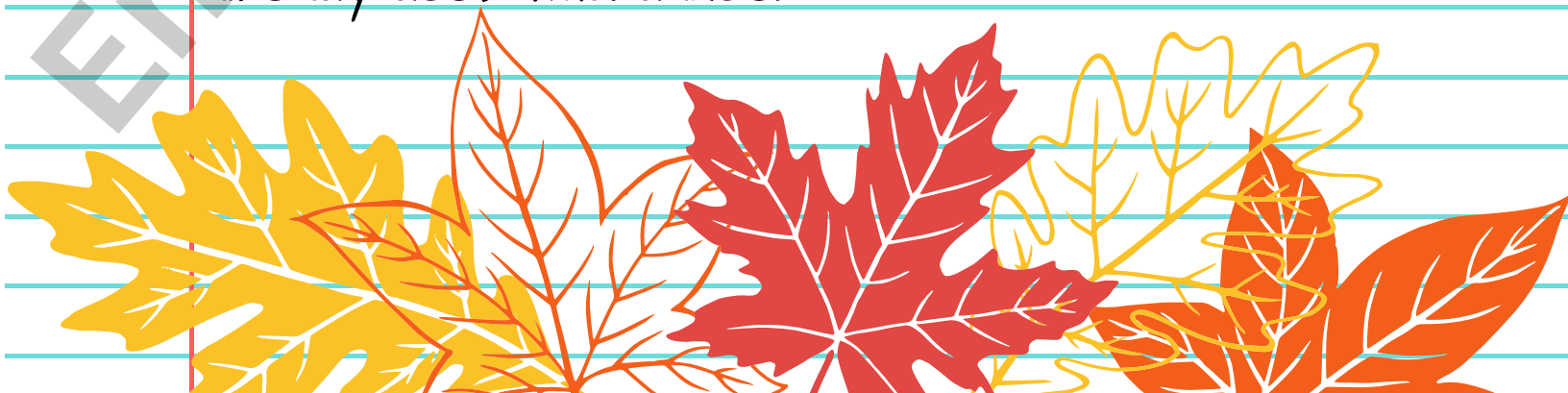


background or even if they just like the colors. The dancer will lay them out and dance around to music while adding the hoops, flipping them between their legs and around their body making intricate shapes. Some of the shapes have significant meanings. For example, the Eagle is a very sacred bird to Native Americans as it flies the highest, meaning it gets the closest to God. So they often will do moves they call the Eagle which we as a cast and crew had the opportunity to learn from Naabaahii Tsosie a Navajo dancer.

Naabaahii Tsosie  
Photo by BYU



Currently, Naabaahii is a dancer who goes around the world and has been to places like Brazil, China, and all over to be able to dance his familial cultural dances. He also is was the recent president of the Native American Club here on BYU Campus, Tribe of Many Feathers. While Naabaahii loves sharing his culture through Native American dance, he doesn't necessarily want to do that for the rest of his life. He is studying neuroscience and hopes to be able to go into the medical field, go to the reservation where his family is from and be able to bring easier and better health care. His father currently works on a reservation and he has familial ties to one so he spoke of how life on reservations isn't very well taken care of and many young adults are encouraged to leave, get an education, and come back to help the life there. He hopes to bring better ways of life to the reservation as well as be able to help preserve his culture, just as he already does with dance.



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So Naabaahii was able to teach the cast and crew some of the different shapes one can make with the hoops. In the picture above are some of the cast, and Kristie, learning a very simple eagle. He also taught the snake and wowed us with making other things such as making a world with the rings. There are many different things you can make and create. Dancers who train their whole lives have the ability to majestically dance while looping the hoops around creating these complex patterns.

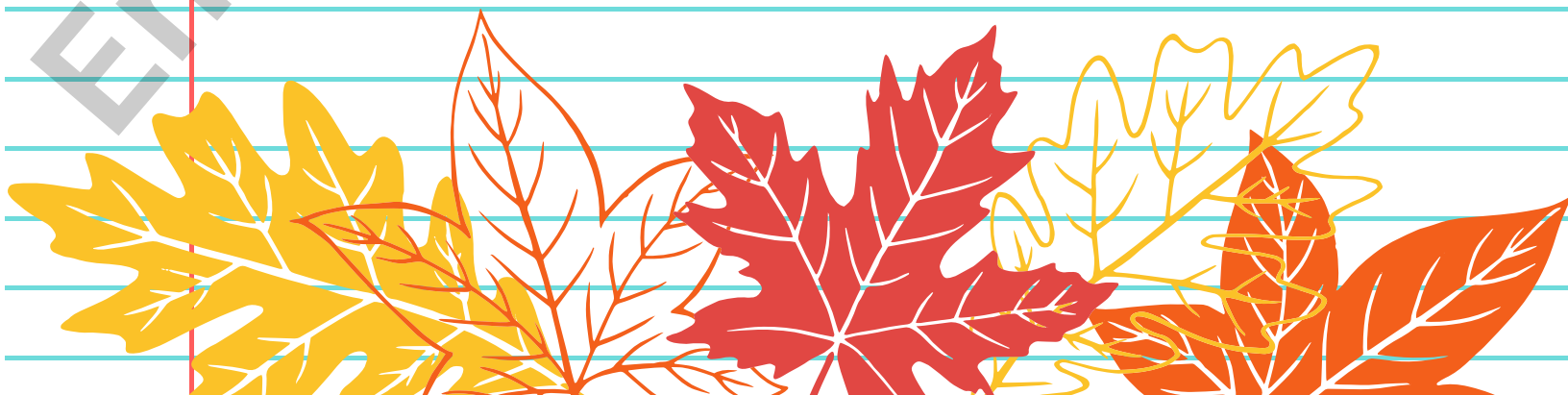


Practicing hoop dancing in rehearsal



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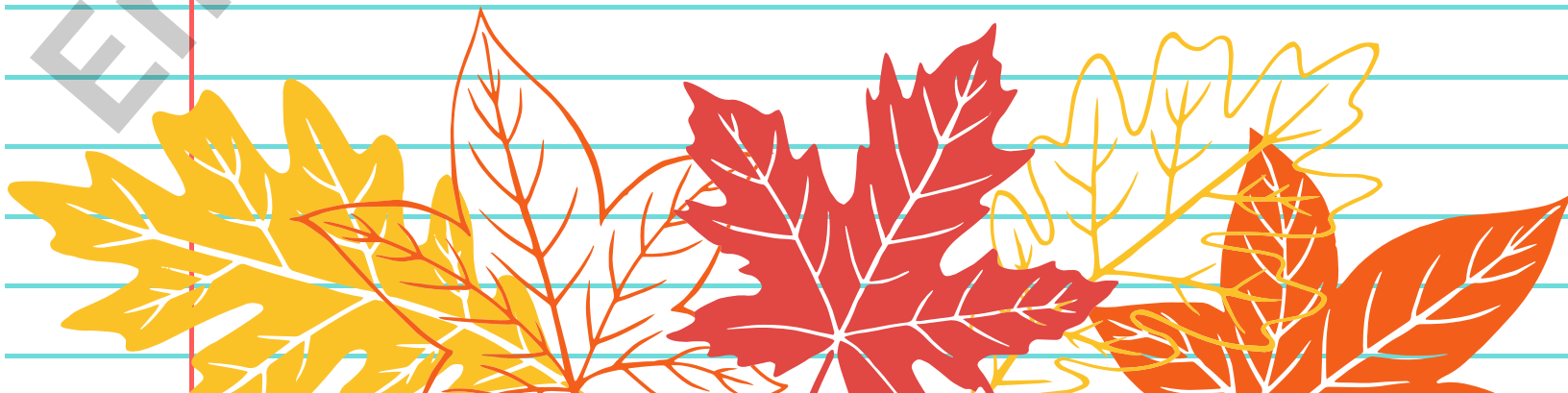
We learned about Native Americans, specifically native culture of the Navajo tribe, and their dancing, specifically hoop dancing which comes from the Hopi or Pueblo people, although it's very popular within many different tribes. Naabaahii also spoke of other tribes' dances and some that are very specific and some that are a little more open, such as PowWow dances. Naabaahii spoke of how he tries to teach people who are interested in Native American dancing. He stated, "We are a dying people" and because of that, he strives to keep his culture alive. However, he did mention that there are very sacred dances that he will only ever teach to someone of Native American bloodline because they are so sacred and special and he doesn't want to dishonor them. He also spoke of the differences between the many tribes and the different dances each does. He personally believes in tribal unity, which is where tribes support and help one another



so they don't lose their culture to the world surrounding them.



Naabaahii creating a world with his hoops



Link to Article: [HERE](#)

## Just Ask

February 23, 2022

By Emma Rollins, Dramaturg

Being a white woman, I have no place to make commentary on Native American/Indigenous People's lives and their culture. So work on this production was very hard to approach because we needed the points of view that the characters strive for in the play but we needed actual resources. Through The Tribe of Many Feathers and some other connections, I was able to find Cheyanne Elton who is of Navajo descent, dancing in the Living Legends Native American Section (with a minor in American Indian Studies), and Naabaahii Tsosie who is also of Navajo descent. He is the previous President of the Tribe of Many Feathers at BYU, and he also travels



the world dancing Native American dance. Both were able to come and were willing to talk with the cast about their families and their connections with the culture. After the cast did some research and sent me questions for the special guests, Cheyanne and Naabaahii were prepared to share their perspectives. They both have connections with the Navajo tribe and were very willing to talk about their experiences as well as their families' experiences, jobs on reservations, experiences they've had with racism, and their thoughts on representation. They answered many hard questions.

Naabaahii Tsosie



While they were able to speak more to Native Americans' opinions in different matters and share their thoughts on Thanksgiving and representation, they acknowledged that even being Native Americans they can't speak for all the different tribes. One of the first things we talked about with both of them was Native American portrayal in the world today through media representations like Pocahontas or the new Paramount show Yellowstone, and Cheyanne spoke about how often their portrayal is either the "wise elder" type or the "fearless warrior." She said, "I am typically not offended by Native American portrayals in media, though there are many instances of misrepresentation, inaccuracies, and times where I am hurt by what I see and read. In general, most BIPOC people tend to have the 'take what they can get' perspective... In film theory there is something called the 'resistant spectator', which film theorist Manthia Diawara writes about. Another film theorist,



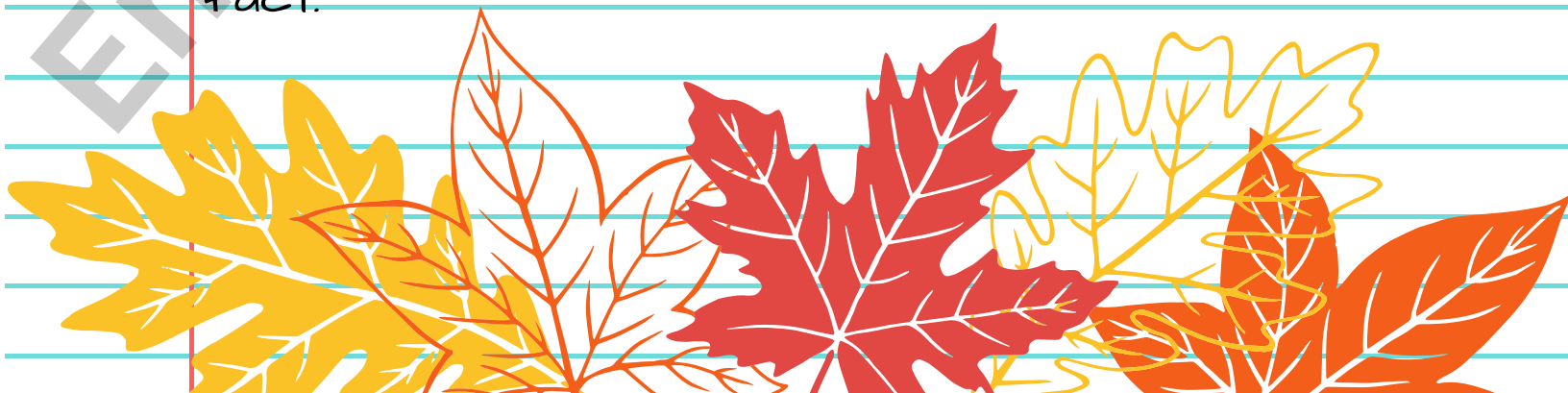


Xu Feng, discusses ideas about 'reclaiming spectator pleasure' (which is about taking what you can get/picking and choosing), and selective retention and disavowal of content [...] I do take offense to certain portrayals, while at the same time Native audiences try to make the most of the representation that we do have." There were also questions asked about Thanksgiving. For both of our guests, they don't feel that Thanksgiving is a day of mourning, however, they also don't feel like it's really something to celebrate. Cheyanne brought up that the traditional Thanksgiving story isn't even real and was made up. So for both of them, it's a day of food, football, and most importantly, time off of school.

Cheyanne Elton



Throughout our time with both Cheyanne and Naabaahii there were many questions asked to try to gain a better understanding of how they feel about racism in the media and even in our own church culture. I personally was worried about asking something in a potentially naive or hurtful way, but when talking with them they both expressed that while some questions may seem racist they can tell when someone is asking them genuinely and when they are trying to be hurtful. The biggest piece of advice that they recommended was to just ask questions directly to someone who is connected and would be an accurate source of information, such as an actual Native American with correct resources and information. They want to feel their voice is heard and valid and the best place to get the answers is to go to someone who would know and not just the internet, where people who aren't necessarily qualified share their opinions as fact.



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Link to Article and Comments: [HERE](#)

## Anti-Racism References: Listen, Learn, Love, Action

February 23, 2022

By Kristie Post Wallace, Director

References compiled in connection with the BYU Contemporary Voices Reading of The Thanksgiving Play by Larissa FastHorse.



Image from Seattle Public Theatre



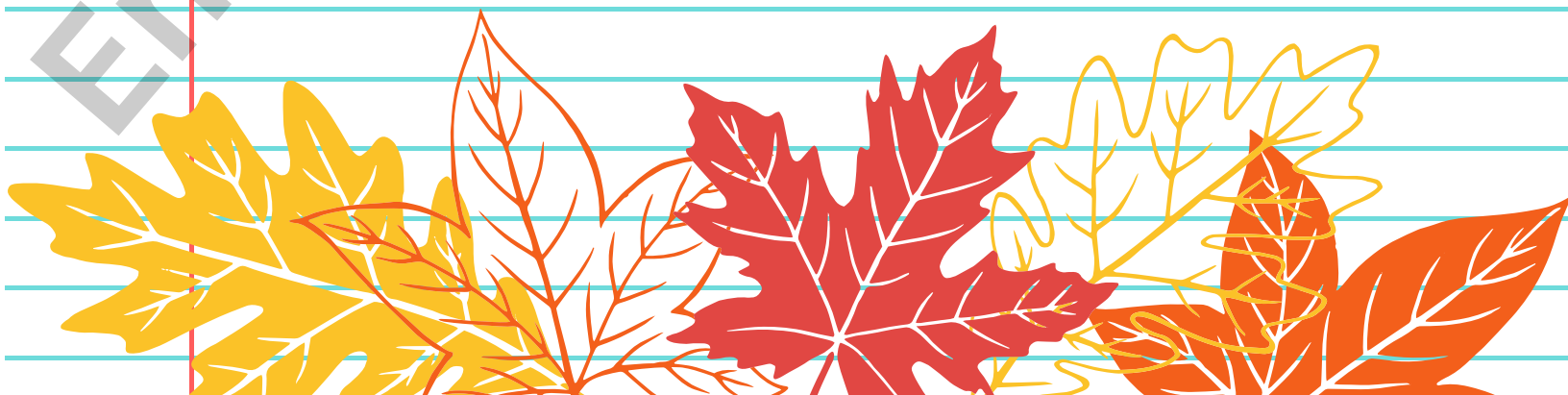
## Pg 43 Racism Definition(dictionary.com)

noun

1. a belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human racial groups determine cultural or individual achievement, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to dominate others or that a particular racial group is inferior to the others.
2. Also called institutional racism, structural racism, systemic racism. a policy, system of government, etc., that is associated with or originated in such a doctrine, and that favors members of the dominant racial or ethnic group, or has a neutral effect on their life experiences, while discriminating against or harming members of other groups, ultimately serving to preserve the social status, economic advantage, or political power of the dominant group.
3. an individual action or behavior based upon or fostering such a doctrine; racial discrimination.
4. racial or ethnic prejudice or intolerance.



I am so grateful to have worked on this timely, delightful, and at times uncomfortable play. A few years ago when I began my own anti-racist research and work it was hard. It still is very difficult and I am committed to continue my efforts. I began to take a step back and ask myself "Lord, is it I" (see [Lord, Is It I](#) by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf). You see, I was the drama teacher who at times excused casting white people in BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) roles. It was only when I had an Equity Diversity and Inclusion training a few years ago that I began to wrestle to unlearn and to change. It is still a wrestle. I hope you join me on this journey as we heed President Nelson's call, and the Lord's call, as we pay attention to our own speech and behavior and root out the racism that exists while we speak up and fight for a better world for all of our siblings in God.



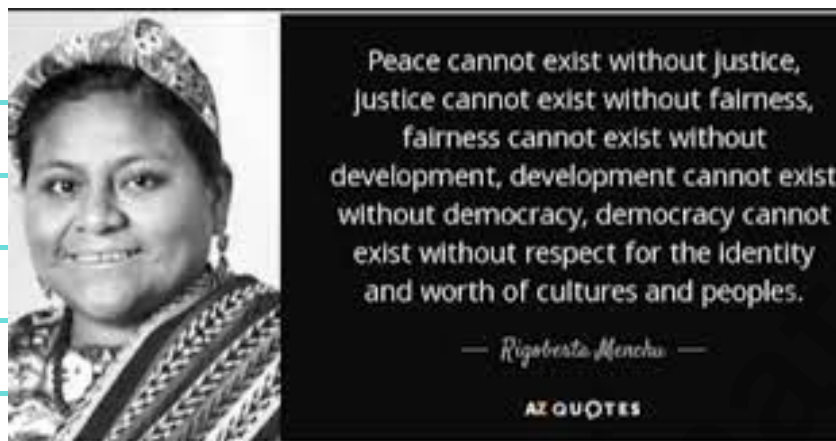
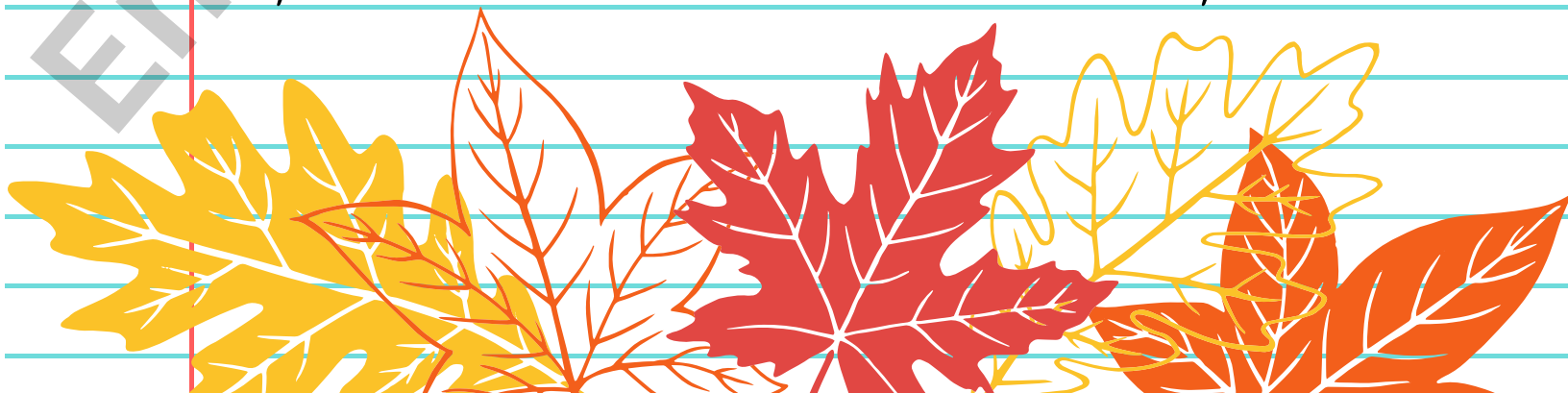


Image from Junior League of London Facebook

We were so lucky to have two members of the Navajo Nation, Cheyanne and Naabaahii, meet with our cast. They answered our questions, danced for and with us, and were an important part of our process in bringing this play to the stage with a deeper understanding of the Indigenous experience. Cheyanne invited us, all of us, to know Indigenous issues are all of our issues. Please learn about them and take action to support them.

Here are a few resources including links to Church articles and talks, quotes, podcasts, blogs, and books to use on your anti-racism journey.

May we all know better and do better. May we be



guided by our Heavenly Parents to see the mote in our own eyes, remove it, and fight to make this earthly existence better for all.

- Kristie

### Recommended Books, Plays, and Podcasts

#### BOOKS

- How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibrim X Kendi
- Caste by Isabel Wilkerson
- Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You (for youth) by Jason Reynolds and Ibrim X Kendi
- Casting a Movement: The Welcome Table Initiative edited by Claire Syler and Daniel Banks

#### PLAYS to Read/See

- Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry

#### Recommended Podcasts and Videos

- [The difference between being "not racist" and antiracist | Ibram X. Kendi](#)

Please listen to the following podcast discussing Green



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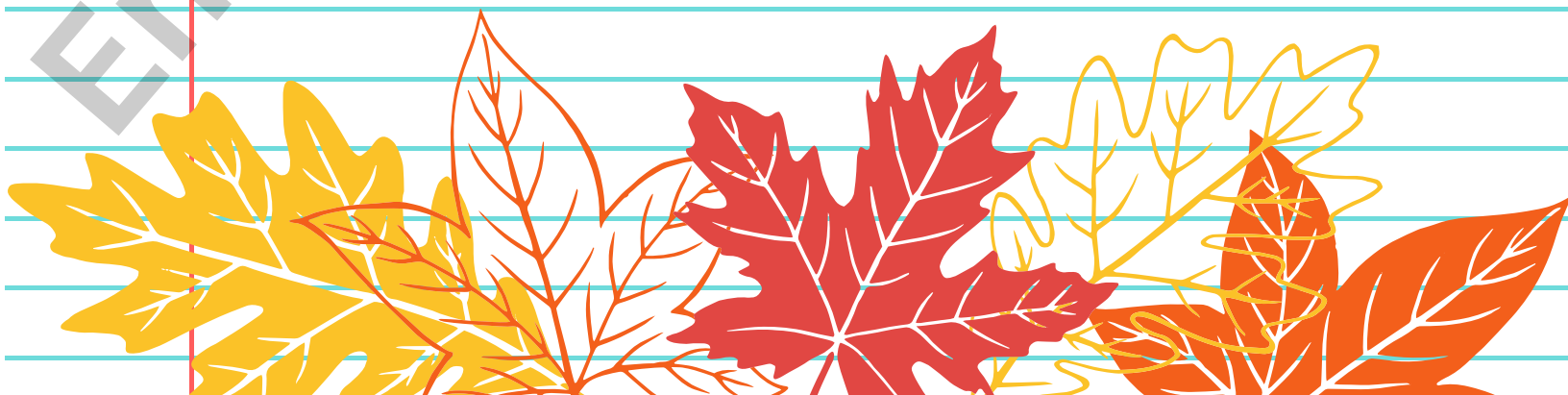
Flake, Brad Wilcox, and the Path to Zion-A  
Conversation with Mauli Bonner.

- [Faith Matters Podcast Episode 104](#)

"We invited Mauli Bonner to our podcast studio this week to address this timely topic, and also to tell us about his remarkable new film His Name is Green Flake. We felt like Mauli showed how to confront difficult issues like race with realism, but also with an abundance of faith, hope and charity. His honest and moving response to this recent incident shows the way to create a path forward toward Zion."

- [Tribe of Testimonies Podcast](#)

"Andrea Hales (Navajo), the host of Tribe of Testimonies, interviews faithful Native American Latter-day Saints of tribes across the U.S. to learn how the Gospel of Jesus Christ has influenced their lives. Everyone's story is different-conversions, families, missions, educations, careers, talents,





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achievements, failures, trials. As we share our stories, maybe we can strengthen each other. May we all walk in beauty. // This podcast is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

However, we support the Church. For further information on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, please visit [ComeuntoChrist.org](http://ComeuntoChrist.org)."

If you find yourself feeling defensive, we invite you to take a step back and ask "Lord, is it I?" We invite you to interrogate your discomfort and learn. For grounding, please refer to this quote on defensiveness:

From Atlas of the Heart by Brene Brown

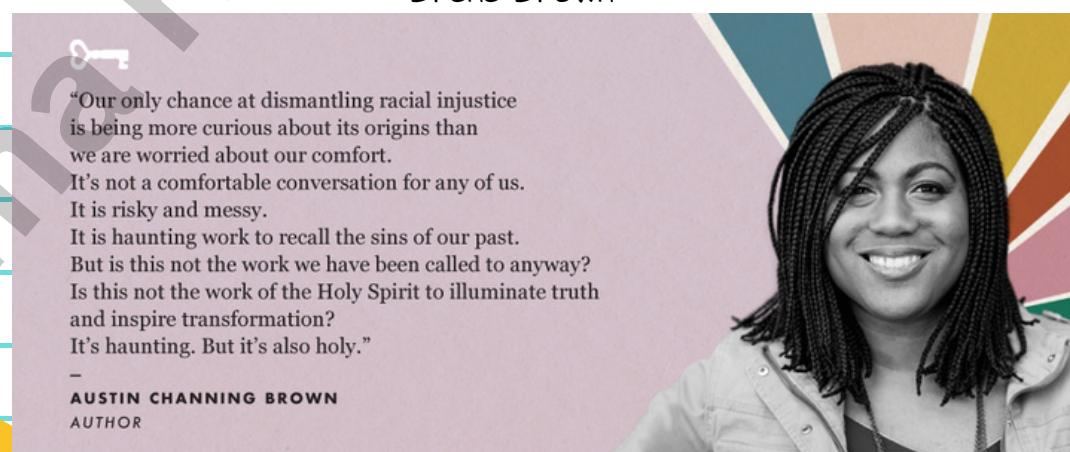
"At its core, defensiveness is a way to protect our ego and a fragile self-esteem. Our research team member Ellen Alley explains that our self-esteem is considered fragile when our failures, mistakes, and imperfections decrease our self-worth. In our work, the opposite of a fragile self-esteem is grounded confidence. With grounded confidence, we accept our



imperfections and they don't diminish our self-worth. It makes sense that defensiveness occurs in areas of our lives where we have fragile self-esteem, or across several areas of our lives if the fragility is more general. Any perceived callout of our weakness is experienced as an attack on our worth, so we fight hard to defend ourselves against it.

"In order to try to limit our exposure to information that differs from how we think of ourselves, we get defensive and over justify, make excuses, minimize blame, discredit, refute, and reinterpret. Defensiveness blocks us from hearing feedback and evaluating if we want to make meaningful changes in our thinking or behavior based on input from others."

Brene Brown



“Our only chance at dismantling racial injustice is being more curious about its origins than we are worried about our comfort. It’s not a comfortable conversation for any of us. It is risky and messy. It is haunting work to recall the sins of our past. But is this not the work we have been called to anyway? Is this not the work of the Holy Spirit to illuminate truth and inspire transformation? It’s haunting. But it’s also holy.”

—  
AUSTIN CHANNING BROWN  
AUTHOR

Unlocking Us PODCAST WITH BRENÉ BROWN | EPISODE #18

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR INTERACTIONS AT CHURCH

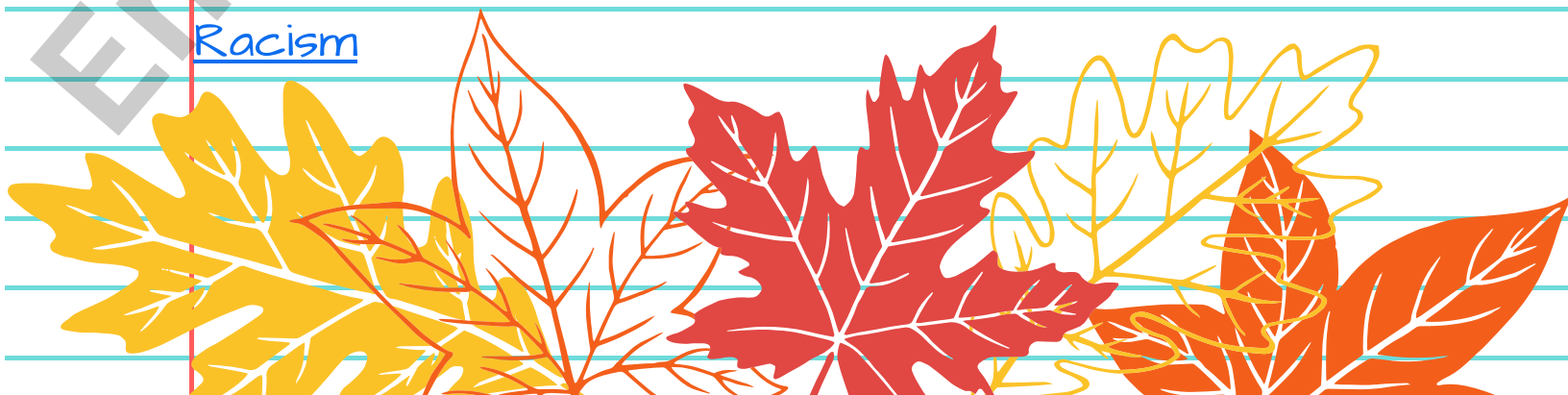
"Today, I call upon our members everywhere to lead out in abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice...I plead with you to promote respect for all of God's children." (President Russell M. Nelson, October 2020)

"As citizens and as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we must do better to help root out racism." He said knowing that "we are all children of God gives us a divine vision of the worth of all others and the will and ability to rise above prejudice and racism." (President Dallin H. Oaks)

[Helpful Resource on How to Discuss Race in our Wards with Lesson Plans and Scriptures. Seattle North Stake](#)

[Ensign Article, No More Strangers](#)

[New Era Article, 2020, What is the Church's Stance on Racism](#)



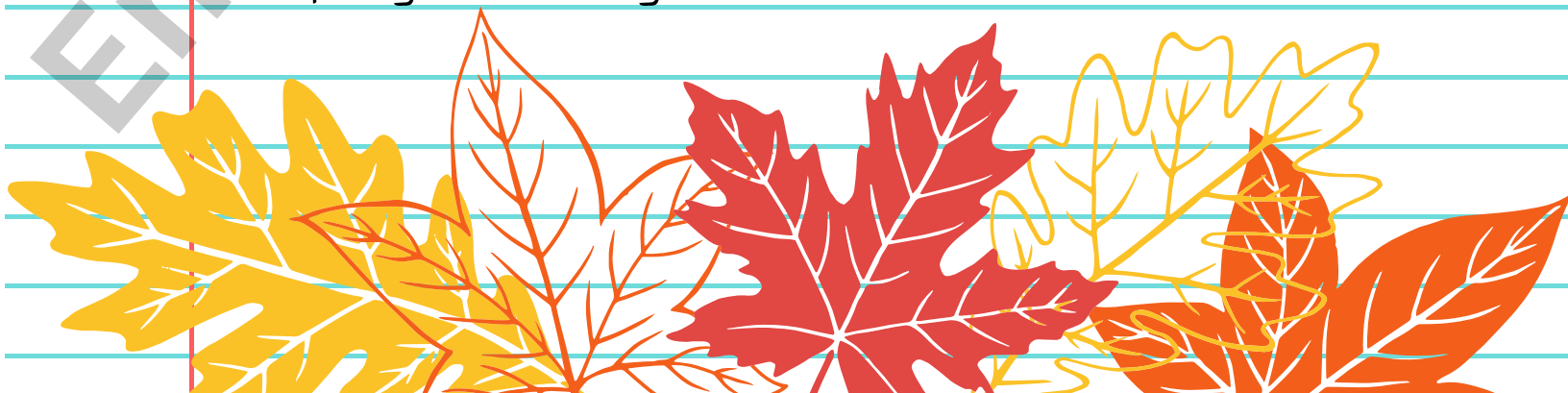
Another resource on how to address racism in the church, By Common Consent

Muslims and Latter-day Saints, Pamphlets:

By Emma Rollins, Dramaturg

Recently the leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint Church has been promoting unity and understanding between different churches and different cultures. In many talks spoken in general conferences and many recent outreaches, leaders have been trying to help many members around the world to be more understanding and accepting of people who may have different beliefs from their own.

That being said, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been striving to be more open. So as part of this push to be more accepting, and loving as the Savior is, the church has



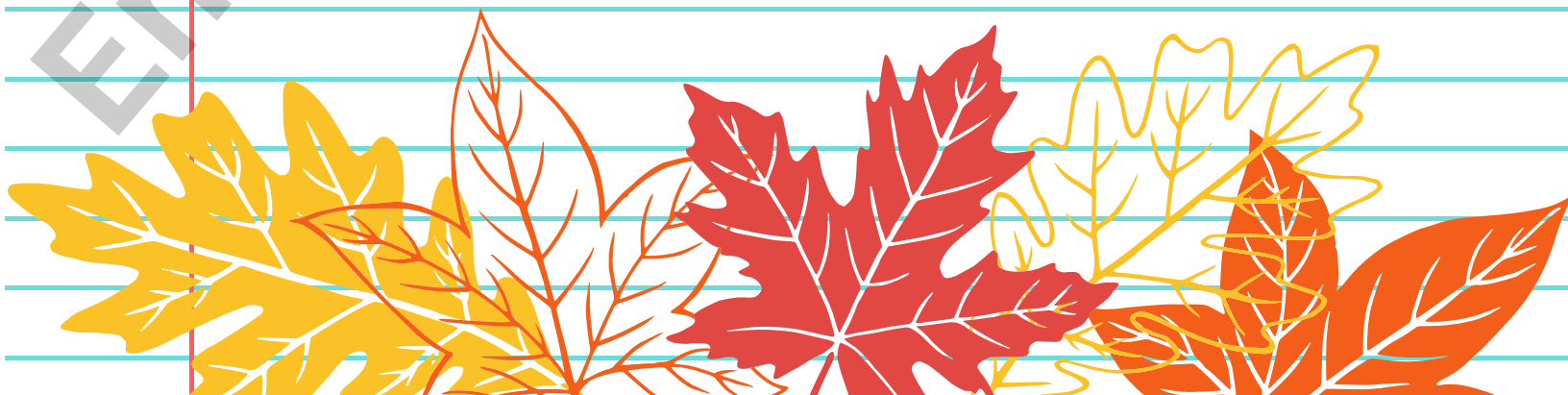
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released new pamphlets urging a better understanding between Muslims and Latter-day Saints. So with this, these pamphlets have been released for many members to better connect with the Muslim brothers and sisters.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

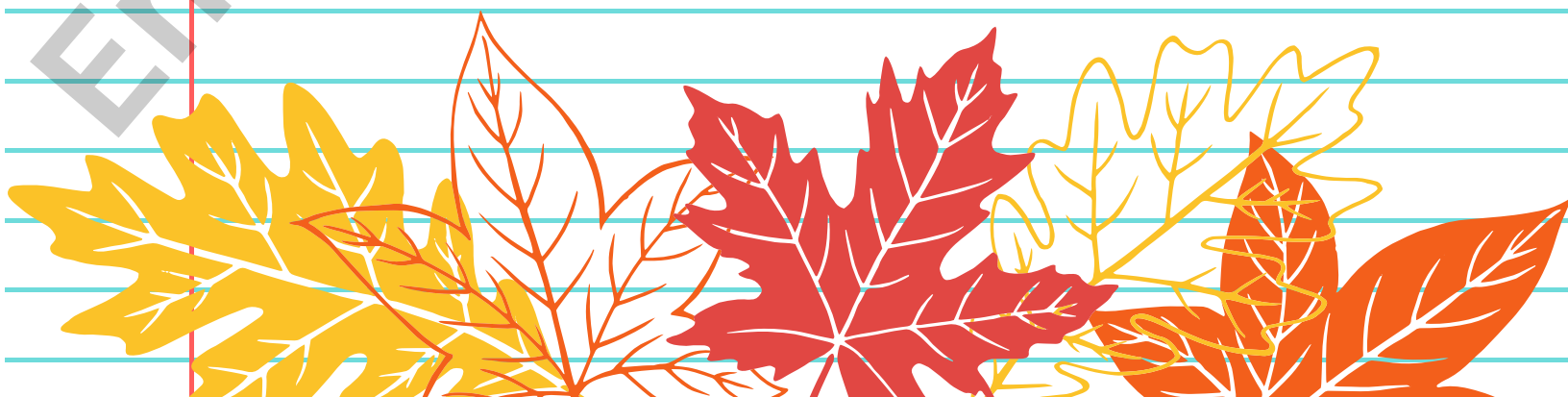
This is just one idea of how the church is striving to better make amends and relationships with members of other faiths, denominations, races, etc. With the church's racist past that people can't deny had its own types of issues, modern leadership sees the problems of the past and is striving to learn from them. We the modern and rising generation need to be more accepting and strive to be more understanding of others when they might be different from us.

Because of our past, let's learn and grow and know that Christ wouldn't have wanted us to feel better than



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others because of our skin tone, or to judge others because they live differently. I hope that in your seeing this play and knowing that we can't have all the answers or experiences and we need to open our hearts and minds to any and all people, you will do so with whomever it may be in your circle that you wish to learn from and grow to become more like Christ himself.



BYU THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS presents

# CONTEMPORARY VOICES

## THE CHRISTIANS

Written by Lucas Hnath

## A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER

Written by Robert L. Freedman  
and Steven Ludvack

## THE THANKSGIVING PLAY

Written by Larissa Fasthorse

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## **CONTEMPORARY VOICES CREATIVE STAFF**

BYU Theatre Artistic Director.....Stephanie Breinholt  
Festival Producer.....Megan Sanborn Jones  
Production Manager .....Jennifer Reed  
Festival Dramaturgs ..... Shelley Graham, Emma Rollins  
Nelke Resident Stage Managers ..... Samantha Daynes, Fish Ford

*Special thanks to the BYU Theatre Steering Committee, the Theatre Production committee, and CFAC Assistant Dean Bridget Benton*

## **THE CHRISTIANS**

By Lucas Hnath

THE CHRISTIANS was commissioned by and premiered in the 2014 Humana Festival of New American Plays at ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE.

February 24, March 5

Directed by Adam Houghton  
Assisted by Avery Dall

Paul, a PASTOR .....Joey Wright  
Paul's WIFE, Elizabeth ..... Julia Rowley  
The ASSOCIATE Pastor Joshua .....Thomas Petrucka  
A church ELDER named Jay..... Tommy Brown  
A CONGREGANT named Jenny ..... Jessica Ashby  
Stage Directions ..... Sophia Cabrera

Rehearsing *The Christians* has deepened my love and gratitude for living prophets, seers, revelators. This play inspires me to feel God's love in our prophets' lessons of faith, warnings against sin, and invitations to repentance. Feeling *certainty* in personal revelation is a theme in the play and one with which we wrestle as followers of Christ. *The Christians* invites me to reflect on how I find certainty, as I align my personal revelation with the teachings of the prophets.

—Adam Houghton



# **THE THANKSGIVING PLAY**

By Larissa FastHorse

Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced the World Premiere of *The Thanksgiving Play* in 2018. *The Thanksgiving Play* was commissioned and originally produced by Artists Repertory Theatre, Damaso Rodriguez, Artistic Director; Sarah Horton, Managing Director, Portland, Oregon.

February 26 March 3

Directed by Kristie Post-Wallace  
Assisted by Rose Allen

Logan ..... Sydney Southwick  
Jaxton ..... Mason Lance  
Caden ..... Aaron Justvig  
Alicia ..... Bronwyn Reed  
Actor/Stage Directions ..... Sara Prior

Through this brilliant and thought-provoking comedy, playwright Larissa FastHorse (Sicangu Lakota Nation) invites white people to understand the Indigenous experience. Have you ever done or said something you saw in this play? What changes can you make in your behavior to be more conscious of the Indigenous experience? FastHorse's hope, and mine, is that you laugh. My hope is you learn about things you've avoided or didn't know before. My hope is we are more committed to know more, know better, and do better through anti-racism work. To learn more, listen to the podcast Tribe of Testimonies or follow James C. Jones on Instagram.

—Kristie Post Wallace

## **A NOTE FROM THE FESTIVAL PRODUCER**

*These performances are part of BYU Theatre's mission to develop the best art and artists. The readings are from largely unedited scripts, allowing the performers and the audience to engage with the work of master playwrights whose important voices might otherwise not be heard in our university community. This enables student artists to grow in versatility in their craft through concert readings with minimal production elements. Each performance will be followed by a brief post-show discussion.*

*If you'd like to discover more about these shows, including resources (articles, talks, and podcasts) on anti-racism, scan this QR code:*

